

WASHINGTON , DC - Representative Lee Terry (R-NE) today has re-introduced bipartisan legislation to improve a program that helps schools adjacent to federal lands pay for construction projects.

Terry's bill addresses the school construction funding portion of the Impact Aid program, which compensates schools affected by a federal presence , such as military installations or Native American reservations. Since federal property is exempt from local property taxes , these schools - such as Bellevue Public Schools - lose a main source of revenue while educating large numbers of federal students.

"The goal is to create a more balanced program that best serves Native American and military children," Terry said. "Impact Aid has historically been under-funded in meeting the needs of our local school districts. This bill will help ensure the most equitable use of available dollars as we continue working to increase overall funding for the Impact Aid program."

"I'm extremely happy Congressman Terry recognizes the needs facing military school districts in these difficult times , " said Dr. John Deegan , superintendent of Bellevue Public Schools and a member of the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) board of directors.

The current Impact Aid construction program allows for unequal funding between military and Native American districts, the two types of schools that receive this assistance. In 2005 and 2004, \$27 million was made available for Impact Aid competitive construction grants. In 2005, only one out of 8 competitive grants was awarded to a military impacted school district. In 2004, only three of 15 recipients were military school districts, and only one of 17 recipients in 2003 was a military school.

Terry, Co-Chairman of the House Impact Aid Caucus, said the current funding patterns ignore that 36 percent of the 1 million federal students are from military impacted schools. Only about 12 percent are Native American land students.

Terry's bill, based on a plan supported by both Native American lands groups and military school districts, would make the school construction program more equitable by ensuring that both types of schools receive a larger portion of construction dollars than under the current system. Less money would be sent to emergency construction grants and emergency funds would be mainly reserved for use by Native American schools.

This legislation would also help schools affected by Global Rebasing at the Department of Defense (DoD). Over the next four years, DoD estimates that 38,000 military children will be returning to schools from closing overseas military bases.

Under Terry's bill, schools that experience a 10% increase in the number of military students would be allowed to apply for emergency Impact Aid construction grants.

[Click here](#) to hear Congressman Terry explain this important issue.

